

Minutes – Herons’ Moor Academy

Meeting Date: 4 March 2026

Location: HMA

Time: 5.00pm

Chair:	Karen Ryan (KR)	Sponsor Councillor
	Wendy Stack (WS)	Support Staff Councillor
	Vacancy	Parent Councillor
	Stuart Harrington (SH)	Sponsor Councillor (Vice Chair)
	Andrew Csoka (AC)	Parent Councillor
	Vicky Green (VG)	Teacher Councillor
	Fleur Kent (FK)	Sponsor Councillor
	Georgie Tinker (GT)	Principal
In Attendance	Craig Jones	Executive Principal
	Dave Beesley (DB)	Vice Principal
	Wendy Hellin (WH)	Clerk
Apologies	Tom Crabtree (TC)	Sponsor Councillor
	Sue Burns (SB)	Clerk

Minutes produced by a cover Clerk

Item	Welcome, Introductions and Apologies	Action
1.1	KR welcomed everyone to the meeting. Craig Jones was welcomed as the Executive Principal for Herons’ Moor Academy.	
1.2	Absent with apologies: Tom Crabtree	
2.0	Declarations of Interest	
2.1	None declared.	
3.0	Minutes of Previous Meeting	
3.1	The minutes of the previous meeting (14 January) were agreed to be a true and accurate record.	
3.2	Actions from those minutes	
3.3	GT to circulate the statistics for the number of children with a global majority heritage at the next AC meeting – Carried forward	
3.4	TF to share the Castle Primary School Parent AC Vacancy leaflet with GT – Carried forward	
3.5	Tom Crabtree to determine what percentage of PP children attend after school clubs as part of his next PP Link Visit report - Carried forward	
4.0	Academy Council Membership & COAC Update	
4.1	There remains one Parent Councillor vacancy and a Sponsor Councillor vacancy following no expressions of interest to the last advertisement.	
5.0	Teaching and Learning – Vicky Green	
5.1	Vicky Green gave a presentation on Teaching and Learning developments at Herons’ Moor Academy. The slides and further information are shared on Governor Hub.	
5.2	VG explained that the academy has spent the past 18 months developing a Teaching & Learning Framework in partnership with Chris Baker from the Trust. After a year of co-construction and staff engagement, the focus this academic year has been on building a shared understanding of the framework’s 12 key areas. Each term, teachers concentrate on two complementary focus areas—for example, practice and relationships in Term 4—with	

	the aim of improving consistency, strengthening pedagogical clarity, and supporting staff in using evidence-informed strategies.	
5.3	In practice, teachers begin each term by reviewing and refining “mental models” that outline active ingredients, agreed techniques, and potential deliberate differences for each focus area. Lessons are then planned with these priorities in mind, and termly reviews gather staff reflections on confidence, implementation, and CPD needs. Leadership monitoring, trust reviews, and staff questionnaires inform adjustments to CPD—for instance, arranging school visits to explore engagement strategies after variation was identified in this area.	
5.4	The developing framework has already led to several early impacts: a growing shared pedagogical language, increased teacher confidence, more precise professional conversations, and monitoring that aligns directly with agreed priorities. Staff feedback is shaping responsive CPD, and the cyclical process of agreeing, testing, refining, and embedding strategies is strengthening quality assurance across the academy.	
6.0	Academy Council Report	
6.1	GT has reviewed the AC report content to ensure Councillors have a wider overview of the school as well as more detailed data for all year groups. Academy Councillors were encouraged to challenge and ask questions on any area of the report.	
6.2	Behaviour and Attitudes, Attendance	
6.2.1	Year to date for attendance is 95.1%, against a national target of 97%. This has improved hugely on previous years. There has been a culture change with attendance. DB works with all leaders on this shared focus. Incrementally, it is improving although it is still below where it should be. Staff work with Fiona and Connor in the central team to discuss serious cases where there are extremely complex family situations. There are case studies for several key pupils where small steps of progress have been made. There have been two attendance meetings since half term.	
6.2.2	There have been no exclusions or suspensions.	
6.3	Did you see more absence in the week where there was inset day?	
6.3.1	Yes, most academies saw a dip after half term. This is typical, and is often seen after a break, whether or not there is an inset day.	
6.4	When you are looking at the trend analysis, is it the winter or summer months that have the lowest attendance?	
6.4.1	We look at days of the week more, and often see Monday and Friday as days with lower attendance. Anecdotally, we see lower attendance in September. We can look further at the trends over the year.	
6.5	Have you done any work on inclusion and if there is any link to the global majority families?	
6.5.1	We do see that Eastern European families (rather than global majority families) are taking term time holidays to visit families.	
6.6	Curriculum Development	
6.6.1	GT reported strong progress across curriculum areas. Maths and English remain secure, while the wider curriculum—science, geography and soon history—has been a key focus this year. Science was reviewed in Terms 1–2; geography in Terms 3–4 with support from Craig, who reviewed books, subject leadership and pupil voice. Work is underway to strengthen local history within the curriculum. A partnership with English Heritage specialist Michael Gawley has led to new planning, including a whole-school Local History Week scheduled for May. A visiting colleague from Frome Vale will support the history review and meet with the history lead.	
6.7	Early Years Update	
6.7.1	Early Years continues to build on improvements made last year under Donna’s leadership. A key development has been the introduction of the SeeSaw platform to strengthen	

	communication and parent engagement. A small parent trial held for the nursery before Christmas was highly positive; Seesaw is now rolled out to nearly all nursery families (26 of 32 have signed up). The platform is used to share weekly planning summaries, home learning tips, and individual or group learning photos. Parents report improved conversations with their children about learning.	
6.8	How do you provide a bespoke curriculum for more-able pupils?	
6.8.1	This can be explored through a future visit; tailored provision continues to be strengthened.	
6.9	Could sharing weekly or termly learning intentions improve parental understanding and support?	
6.9.1	Yes. Options such as one-page summaries, Dojo-style updates, or consistent year-group communication will be explored for a trust-wide approach.	
6.10	Is Seesaw time-consuming for staff to manage?	
6.10.1	No. Planning is summarised using AI to reduce workload. Weekly updates take around 10 minutes.	
6.11	Are free platforms as secure as paid versions?	
6.11.1	Parent permissions have been collected; only individual parents see photos of their own children. A data risk assessment will be completed should wider rollout occur.	
6.12	Achievement & Quality of Education	
6.12.1	GT shared key data headlines: • Year 6: Results from three mock SATs show strong progress. Reading sits at 93% reaching expected or above; maths has risen from 50% to 67%. Leaders (including the Head Teacher, Deputy and SENCo) provide direct teaching and emotional support to target pupils, which has had clear impact. Writing remains an area of focus, with intensive small-group conferencing planned for Term 5. • Year 4 MTC: Current average is 20.6/25, aiming to meet or exceed last year's 21.8. • Year 1 Phonics: 56% currently passing, expected to rise with improved access arrangements and teacher-led assessments. • Early Years GLD: Currently 53% with a target of 80–85% by year end.	
6.13	Do pupils feel more valued having senior staff teach intervention groups?	
6.13.1	Yes—parents report children feeling cared for and supported, especially vulnerable pupils.	
6.14	How are writing gaps being addressed?	
6.14.1	Through targeted small-group teaching, close conferencing, and focusing on the most recent evidence for assessment.	
6.15	Pupil Premium	
6.15.1	GT confirmed that pupil premium strategy actions are underway, with strengthened challenge in Pupil Progress Meetings. Focus areas include supporting reading and writing gaps for PP groups and ensuring equitable access to books, materials and targeted staffing. A more detailed update is planned for the next meeting.	
6.16	Who scrutinises PP expenditure?	
6.16.1	Ofsted ask in detail during inspection; internal scrutiny is ongoing through Trust processes and governance challenge.	
6.17	Safeguarding & Inclusion	
6.17.1	A full-day safeguarding audit was completed the previous week, attended by senior leaders and a governance representative. • The school scored 62%, considered strong under the more challenging updated framework. • Most development points relate to recording processes rather than practice.	

	The auditor praised the safeguarding culture and the visible engagement of leaders and Academy Councillors.	
6.18	Were lower scores due to practice or paperwork?	
6.18.1	Mostly recording and evidence presentation—the right things are being done, but further rigour is needed in documentation.	
6.19	Personal Development & Enrichment	
6.19.1	GT highlighted several successes: - The whole-school public speaking competition had high engagement and boosted pupil confidence. Even children with significant needs presented successfully to large audiences. - Future plans include integrating more regular low-stakes speaking opportunities into classroom practice. - The Jill Dando Newsroom continues to flourish, with secondary students mentoring Herons' Moor pupils in journalism and reporting on events such as Reading Week and World Book Day. - A range of trips and enrichment opportunities continue across the school.	
6.20	Will public speaking competitions continue?	
6.20.1	Yes—frequency is under review, but class-based speaking tasks may be introduced more regularly.	
7.0	Health & Safety – Stuart Harrington	
7.1	SH provided an update on Health and Safety: - The facilities team is now fully staffed, including a new team leader. This has led to noticeably increased proactivity and visible improvements across the site during recent walkarounds. - Several training courses have been booked to ensure the team remains compliant, including updates to lapsed qualifications. - New LED lighting has been installed in the preschool, providing improved brightness and efficiency. Additional bulbs have been made available for use across the school, with full school-wide LED upgrades planned for the summer. - The staff room has received new flooring, and new furniture has been selected. Delivery was slightly delayed, but plans are in place to complete the setup, aiming to create a shared and cohesive space with Baytree. - Boys' urinals in Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 have been replaced over the February half term. - A lockdown drill was conducted successfully overall. One class mistakenly responded with the fire evacuation procedure, highlighting a need to reinforce awareness of the distinct alarm tones. This has been followed up with staff. - Ongoing issues with roof leaks continue, particularly in specific offices. Further investigation is planned, potentially involving use of a camera to assess suspected problem areas.	
8.0	Policies	
8.1	The AC discussed the policies presented for review at this meeting. A large number of policies had recently been shared, which felt overwhelming due to the volume and short turnaround time for reading them. It was noted that policies tend to come for review in clusters because of the trust-wide review cycle. CLF (trust-level) policies: These are <i>for information only</i> as they have already been approved by the Trust Board. Academy Councils only need to note them. Local policies: These are the ones requiring Academy Council approval. Members queried how to identify changes, especially when policies appear unchanged year-to-year. It was suggested that, similar to Trust Board practice, policies could be	

	circulated with track changes included, making it easy to see amendments and judge whether a full re-read is needed. • Child-friendly versions of certain policies had been revised recently following audit feedback that language needed to be more accessible to pupils. Updated versions have been made shorter and clearer. • Discussion also covered reasonable adjustments referenced in policies (e.g., for presentation/handwriting) and examples of how staff support children with specific needs. • In relation to the bullying policy, clarification was sought on the reference to each class creating its own “golden rules.” It was explained that the class collaboratively develops a class contract at the start of the year. The terminology will be updated from “golden rules” to “class contract” to reflect current practice.	
8.2	The Academy Council approved the following: • Behaviour Policy • EDI Policy • Presentation Policy • Nest policies • Child friendly versions of several academy policies, as detailed on Governor Hub.	
8.0	Matters for the attention of the board/COAC	
8.1	None	
9.0	AOB	
9.1	AC raised a query regarding children bringing toys and other items into school. Some parents had expressed that this appeared linked to behaviour management, with certain children receiving additional allowances (such as bringing toys or having extra playtime) when they misbehave. GT explained that the school’s approach is based on equity, recognising that different children need different forms of support to be successful. Incentives are sometimes used short-term as part of behaviour plans agreed with parents, though this is not always visible to other pupils.	
9.2	Staff acknowledged that this can lead to misconceptions among pupils that misbehaviour results in rewards. The school continues to emphasise intrinsic motivation and the principle that some children need additional support for a limited period to help them make positive choices. A follow-up conversation was offered to provide more detail where needed.	
9.3	There was no further business reported.	
9.4	The meeting closed at 18.45hrs.	